



Mayor Ashley Swearengin

Telephone Town Hall Questions and Answers

Mayor Ashley Swearengin conducted a telephone Town Hall meeting on February 23, 2010. Several questions asked by participants required more detailed responses from staff within various City of Fresno departments. Responses to those questions are provided within this document.

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS/STREETS

What is the plan and timeline for widening Peach Avenue to improve traffic flow?

Plans call for Peach Avenue from Belmont to Kings Canyon Avenues to be widened to 4 lanes with a divided median island. Traffic signals will be installed or modified at the intersections of Belmont, Tulare, Huntington, and Kings Canyon. According to the current timeline, street plans will be completed in December, 2010; acquisition of right of way and the relocation of utilities will begin in 2012; and approximately 16 months of construction will begin in summer, 2013. If current timelines hold, the project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2014.

Is a traffic signal planned for the intersection of Huntington Blvd. and Peach Avenue in the future?

Yes, a traffic signal will be installed as part of the Peach Avenue widening project described above. That project is currently scheduled for construction from summer, 2013 to fall, 2014.

Have traffic signals been synchronized on Herndon Avenue? If so, there seems to be a problem with synchronization at Herndon and West Avenue.

Yes, Herndon traffic signals are synchronized from Golden State Boulevard on the west end to the city limits at Willow on the east end. The operational hours of synchronization are Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The benefits of synchronization are best realized by traveling at the posted speed limit of 50 MPH. Because the technology causes cars to aggregate and travel in "platoons" (which start stretching apart after a greater length of travel), the signal at Herndon & West is used to bring the platoons back into a closer grouping. Any experienced stop there should be relatively brief during the synchronization hours (assuming motorists are travelling at the speed limit), and helps make the overall traffic

flow smoother through the other intersections on Herndon, while balancing the travel needs of traffic on the cross streets.

More information on current and future synchronization projects can be found on the City's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) website at www.fresno.gov/ITS.

I have concerns about traffic flow on Shaw and Polk traffic issues. Lanes are reduced from 3 to 2 and then back to 3; when will it get fixed? Same problem on McKinley and Hughes.

Shaw & Polk -- Construction will commence this summer on a project to improve traffic flow at the intersection of Shaw & Polk. This includes widening Shaw to 4 lanes from State Highway 99 to Polk, and installing left-turn signals at the Shaw/Polk intersection. The traffic bottleneck on Polk south of Shaw will be corrected when the property develops, at which time the City will require that Polk be widened to 4 lanes as a condition of development. Otherwise, taxpayers would have to pay for the acquisition of the necessary right-of-way and pay for the widening, and there is currently no funding available to undertake such a project at taxpayer expense.

McKinley & Hughes -- The City has been approved to receive Federal funding in summer, 2012 to install traffic signals at McKinley & Hughes and at McKinley & Marks. Turn lanes will be added to the intersections as part of the project. The Redevelopment Agency is also completing engineering designs to widen McKinley to 4 lanes between State Highway 99 and Marks; however, no funding is currently available to purchase the necessary right-of-way or to construct the improvements.

Was a street sign removed from the utility pole at Fresno Street and Herndon Avenue? In general, what is the City's current policy/approach to posting street signs on utility poles so streets are clearly marked at major intersections?

A supervisor inspected the intersection and reported that all signs are in place, with no evidence of any street signs being removed. The older policy on major intersections was to install the smaller local residential street signs on the corners. The City's newer and current policy is to install the larger oversized street name signs as soon as poles are installed by new development. The City is retrofitting older locations with the newer signs as we perform other work in the immediate area. This upgrade is included on the list of planned improvements.

If there is ever a concern that an intersection is not clearly marked, please call 621-CITY and ask for Traffic Engineering.

Report of potholes on McKenzie between Maple and Chestnut

Crews were dispatched to this location on February 25, 2010 to repair the reported potholes.

Residents can report potholes at any time by calling 621-CITY(2489). This will help ensure repairs are made in a timely manner.

When will repairs be made to Maroa Street between Bullard and Barstow?

Portions of that 1/2 mile stretch of Maroa are located in the County, while other parts are in the City. Specifically regarding the City portion, it is worth noting that all City street surfaces are evaluated and graded according to a Pavement Condition Index (PCI), which scores the driving condition of a given section of street surface on a 0-100 scale. A score of 100 would indicate a newly-constructed and surfaced street, while a single-digit score represents a failing street surface. The City uses the PCI scores to help guide where the next available street repair dollars are spent. The portions of Maroa between Bullard and Barstow that are in the City have PCI scores between 32 and 38, which are on the favorable side of the scale. The sources of revenue that support street repair are also current significantly reduced due to the economy, and current repairs are being performed on street surfaces with PCIs well below that which is found on Maroa. Regardless, the City has been in discussions with the County about a shared overlay project on Maroa, and hopefully economic conditions will change favorably and allow for this project in the near future.

What is the status on the construction of Veterans Boulevard?

The City, in partnership with CalTrans, is currently performing the necessary environmental documentation and engineering design work for the construction of Veterans Boulevard. A Veterans Boulevard community meeting was held on February 24, 2010, where design alternatives were presented and public comments were received. The focus of the current design work includes the section from Herndon to Shaw, including freeway and railroad overpasses, entrance/exit ramps to State Highway 99, and connections to Golden State Boulevard. It is projected that environmental clearance, final engineering design, and right-of-way acquisition will be completed by 2013. Actual construction is expected to commence between 2013 and 2015, depending on availability of funds.

Why was median island landscaping torn out at Fig Garden Drive north of Gates? Who is responsible for replacing it?

In actuality, no median island landscape has been torn out at this location. Some confusion may have arisen because a re-engineering of the median has occurred, in which a left turn lane was eliminated and filled in with dirt. However, current and historical aerial photos show the same landscape in place before and after the median changed.

Recently, Fruit Avenue between Clinton and Ashlan Streets was reduced from 4 lanes to 2 lanes, with a bike lane and common turn lane – why was this done? Was it to reduce traffic flow?

When traffic volumes are lighter on certain sections of major streets, the City analyzes segments of the street to determine if it is a good candidate for what is called a "road diet". A road diet consists of converting a 4-lane street (two lanes of travel in each direction) to 3 lanes (one lane of travel in both directions, plus a center lane that permits left turns in both directions). Bike lanes are added to enhance safety for motorists, public transit, cyclists, and pedestrians, and it creates a more complete street for all

modes of transportation. The bike lanes also enable the City to expand its bike and trail system, which helps to enhance public health, recreation, and air quality. The addition of bike lanes on Fruit enhanced and expanded the existing bike lane network, while still supporting vehicle traffic volumes.

Sierra Avenue from Maroa to Blackstone needs repairs– will Measure C fix this? If not, what resource exists to address it?

Measure C is one potential source of revenue to provide these repairs, although Measure C revenues (which are a portion of sales tax) are down dramatically due to the economy. Further complications are that portions of that 1/2 mile stretch of Sierra are located in the County, and parts are in the City. Specifically regarding the City portion, it is worth noting that all City street surfaces are evaluated and graded according to a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) that scores the driving condition of a given section of street surface on a 0-100 scale. A score of 100 would indicate a newly-constructed and surfaced street, while a single-digit score represents a failing street surface. The City uses the PCI scores to help guide where the next available street repair dollars are spent. The portions of Sierra between Maroa and Blackstone that are in the City have PCI scores between 31, which are indeed on the lower side of the scale, and 78 (which is above the City average). Current repairs are being performed on street surfaces with PCIs well below that which is found on Sierra. That having been stated, the City has been in discussions with the County about a shared overlay project on Sierra, and hopefully economic conditions will change favorably and allow for this project in the near future.

Fresno Unified School District requires parents with children attending Easterby elementary school to drop off students on Peach Avenue instead of Tulare Street. Who can parents call regarding this?

The Fresno Unified School District has responsibility for specifying pick up and drop off locations for their school campuses. Fresno Unified recommends speaking first with the principal of Easterby Elementary to discuss any concerns. If additional help is needed, contact the District Safety Coordinator at 457-3980.

The City of Fresno Traffic Engineering Division works with all local school districts to assist in providing Safe Routes to School and to address access/parking issues around schools. Vehicle congestion around schools can also be reduced by encouraging students to ride their bike or walk to school when possible. Studies have shown that this exercise improves health and enhances the ability of students to learn.

DEPARTMENT: HOMELESS POLICY AND PREVENTION

Why are people still panhandling on median islands? Is panhandling illegal?

The Median Island Safety Ordinance passed by the Fresno City Council was passed by the City Council in February and will go into effect in April. The ordinance limits solicitation of any kind on median islands within the City of Fresno because of the safety hazard it creates for those standing on medians as well as for motorists.

While soliciting for donations on public property, whether for oneself or a charitable cause, is not an illegal activity, "aggressive panhandling" is considered a misdemeanor under the City's municipal code.

What's being done to clean up the homeless encampment in downtown Fresno between Highway 99 and Freeway 41?

The encampment described is located at south end of the now-closed Monterey Street Bridge, just east of Freeway 99. A City crew is scheduled to clean up of trash and debris from the area in March. The City and its partner agencies have visited the encampment on a number of occasions to offer housing assistance and other support services to homeless individuals in the area.

Homeless people are living in the Wal-Mart parking lot at Shaw and Brawley? Can anything be done about this?

Wal-Mart has a national policy that allows Recreational Vehicle users to use store parking lots for overnight camping. Wal-Mart is responsible for ensuring the legal and appropriate use of store property.

After the City cleaned up the homeless encampment at G and California, residents were told that the adjacent alley would be cleaned up as well. When will this be done?

The City of Fresno conducted trash clean-ups in the area of the G and California. In addition, clean-ups were done in the area of Los Angeles and F, and in the alley to the south. While no new clean-up requests have been received since that time, City staff will investigate whether additional clean-up in the area is required.

DEPARTMENT: DOWNTOWN & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Has the City considered expanding professional gaming in downtown as part of its revitalization strategy to attract people from surrounding smaller communities?

Gaming is one important component of the entertainment offerings available in Downtown Fresno. The continued success of this amenity — along with baseball, soccer, and other major events at Chukchansi Park, and stronger dining and nightlife — will be critical to building on Downtown's potential as a regional, 24-hour attraction.

On December 17 the City Council voted unanimously to allow higher table limits at Club One Casino (up to \$1,000 instead of \$200). At the same time the Council streamlined the approval of new card games at Club One, eliminating City approval of individual games and allowing any games permitted by the State Bureau of Gambling Control.

What is the City doing to promote the growth of local businesses?

The City of Fresno's economic development strategy is primarily focused on supporting and growing our locally owned businesses. Over 70% of the businesses in the City of Fresno are locally-owned, and account for over two-thirds of the jobs in our community.

The City's approach includes reinforcing a business-friendly culture inside of City Hall that supports innovative policies and initiatives that benefit our local business community.

The City also works to educate our community about the benefits of supporting locally owned business as a means to establishing a sustainable and diverse economy. As one example, the City is developing a local business directory to encourage consumers to do business with locally owned companies.

For more information on the City's local business initiatives, please contact Amy Huerta at amy.huerta@fresno.gov

DEPARTMENT: FRESNO AREA EXPRESS

When will repairs to the bus stop at First and Dakota completed? What is being done to notify riders in advance that bus shelters will be out of service for repairs?

The date for completion of repairs to the bus stop at First and Dakota is uncertain at this point due to scheduling and weather delays. City staff is reviewing the project in an effort to expedite the work. Prior to a stop being taken out of service for repairs, signs should be posted notifying riders of start and end dates, as well as alternate routes and bus

stop locations. If signs are not posted or have been removed, please notify FAX by calling 621-RIDE (7433).

How does FAX deal with unruly bus passengers?

Once a bus operator becomes aware of unruly behavior by a bus passenger, either through personal observation or from another passenger, the following action may be taken:

- The passenger is notified that the behavior is unacceptable on the bus and must cease, or the passenger will be asked to exit the bus;
- If the behavior continues, the bus operator should follow through with the warning and ask the passenger to exit the bus. The bus operator then notifies FAX Dispatch that a passenger has been ejected and files a report at the end of the shift;
- If the passenger refuses to exit, the bus operator will give the passenger the last option of exiting or being cited for unruly behavior. The bus operator will call for supervisory and/or police assistance, depending on the severity of the situation;
- Once on the scene, the supervisor and/or police take over the incident and determine the action to be taken. The incident is documented and logged. Further action may be taken against the passenger, up to and including a suspension of riding privileges, if appropriate.

How can a passenger report a bus driver who is texting while driving?

There are a variety of ways that customers can provide information to the Transit department with concerns or complaints. Customers can call 621-CITY (2489) or 621-RIDE (7433) for this purpose. Customers can also use the FAX Web site @ www.fresno.gov/FAX to report a compliment or complaint online. Or, customer can contact any FAX employee and request to speak with a Supervisor.

DEPARTMENT: POLICE

Why is the City exploring consolidation of services with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office?

The City has offered to work with the County of Fresno and the Fresno County Sheriff's Office to explore options for more effectively aligning public safety resources, with the goal of reducing costs, eliminating duplication, and improving services for all. Agreements have been achieved in some areas but other opportunities remain. The City remains open to further discussions as a way to utilize limited tax dollars in the most beneficial way while continuing to provide the highest level of public safety service to the residents of the City and County of Fresno.

When graffiti is painted over, how is the decision made as to which colors to use? For instance, the sound wall at Dante and Bullard in northwest Fresno is brown but the graffiti team used grey paint.

The City's Graffiti paint-out trucks have seven colors available to. Efforts are made to match existing painted surfaces as closely as possible, but variances do occur. For concrete and block walls, crews use *Industrial Grey* or *Wesley Grey*, depending on which choice most closely matches the wall. The trucks also carry 2 shades of white: *Antique* and *White*; 1 *Beige*, and 2 browns: *Brown* and *Redwood*.

How many tickets has the police department issued to drivers for not complying with the hands free cell phone law? Can anything be done to step up enforcement?

In 2009 there were 12,559 citations written by the City's traffic unit for cell phone violations. So far this year there have been 925 citations issued. The police department takes cell phone violations very seriously and believes that strong enforcement contributes to the safety of our community.

DEPARTMENT: UTILITIES BILLING & COLLECTION

Caller stated that the City's Utilities Billing and Collection department cashes checks that are reported as "lost", even after a replacement check has been sent in. Does the department issue refund checks when overpayments are applied to an account?

The Utilities Billing and Collection department applies payments based on the circumstances pertaining to each individual account. Refunds and credits for over-payment are available, as well as "stops" on processing checks, if appropriate. For assistance with special payment issues, please contact a Utilities Billing and Collection department supervisor at 621-6888.

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING/CODE ENFORCEMENT

What is the history of enforcement at the Zacky Farms processing plant? Who is responsible for ensuring that odor problems are addressed? Is this the responsibility of SJVAPCD or the City?

Since 2007, the City of Fresno Code Enforcement division has monitored the plant for odors on a twice-monthly basis. In addition, the Code Enforcement division is part of a joint task monitoring and enforcement force, along with the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District (SJAPCD). Concerns about odors emitting from industrial plants can be reported to the City by calling 621-8400

Are the vendors who ride around town selling treats from 3 wheel bicycles required to be licensed by the City? If so, does the City enforce this requirement? What can be done about the noise made by the bells on their bicycles?

Bicycle food vendors are required to obtain a Mobile Vendor permit, which is available through the City of Fresno Business Tax Division. The application process requires the vendor to provide a valid Fresno County Health Department Inspection Report for each vehicle, cart or container carrier. Other requirements include identification, fingerprinting, bonding and proof of insurance.

The City's Code Enforcement division is responsible for addressing concerns regarding mobile vendors. To report a suspected violation, please call 621-CITY(2489). Noisy bells are subject to limits established in the City's noise ordinance. While repeated bell ringing may create an annoyance to some individuals, the sound level generally falls below the threshold contained in the ordinance.

Why is it taking so long to get zoo improvements done?

What may appear as a lengthy environmental analysis process has lead to a superior plan/product for the citizens of Fresno, City of Fresno and the Fresno Chaffee Zoo Corporation. The Roeding Park and Fresno Chaffee Zoo Facility Master Plans have recently been updated based on public comments and conclusions drawn from various technical studies. The analysis is being done with careful attention to saving taxpayer dollars, creating an integrated and very high quality zoo and park plan, while crafting the most legally defensible environmental document possible. We believe the significant modifications that have been made within the Zoo EIR process reflect a practical and realistic plan that can be implemented with the assurance that in future years Roeding Park and Chaffee Zoo will truly resemble the proposed plan. We anticipate that the updated Draft Environmental Impact Report will be released for public review around mid-September.

What is being done about the number of trucks and RV's being parked along Golden State Boulevard?

Council Member Andreas Borgeas, working with the Public Works Department and the City Attorney's Office, has drafted an ordinance proposing to limit the length of time that trucks can be parked on public rights-of-way within the City of Fresno. That proposed ordinance is currently undergoing final internal and legal review, and should be presented to City Council for consideration within the next few weeks. A similar ordinance applying to RV's has been discussed as well.

The ordinance should address most of the problems concerning the length of time that trucks are parked on Golden State Boulevard. Many trucks have already been ticketed for illegal parking and the City's enforcement effort is continuing. However, a considerable portion of the truck parking on Golden State Boulevard has occurred not

within the public right-of-way, but rather on private property owned by the railroad. City staff is continuing to work with the railroad to restrict truck parking on their property.

What happened to Urban Growth Management (UGM) program? Wasn't it supposed to provide for the orderly development of streets? Please provide information on the current program.

The City decided to move away from the troubled UGM program in 2004. Between 2004 and 2007, the City adopted new Citywide development impact fee programs to address infrastructure needs for police facilities, fire facilities, parks, major streets and traffic signals. UGM suffered in two main areas: first of all, the UGM fees had not been adjusted since 1989 and thus resulted in the fee revenue being too low to pay for building out the necessary infrastructure; secondly, the UGM program was comprised of numerous small service areas which did indeed provide for the completion of the required infrastructure within small areas, but failed to mitigate the Citywide impacts of the new development that went beyond that immediate service area. The UGM major street program was limited to building one travel lane in each direction on the major 4-lane roads and relied on every property developing in order to actually complete the 4-lane road, thus resulting in numerous bottlenecks throughout the growth areas of the City. The new 2007 major street impact fee program includes all four travel lanes on major arterial roads. The UGM sewer and water fees are still in existence, but the City's Department of Public Utilities is currently conducting a new fee study which may also result in a transition from the older UGM program to a new fee structure for sewer and water infrastructure.

Traffic on Freeway 180 to Temperance Avenue is creating a significant amount of noise in the surrounding neighborhoods. A sound wall should be built to address this. Who is responsible?

The Freeway 180 corridor is contained wholly within the jurisdiction of State of California and CalTrans. Any environmental mitigation that CalTrans would have been required to perform as part of the their construction of Freeway 180, including sound mitigation, would have been addressed through the public environmental process conducted at the time of design and before construction. Any questions regarding state freeways and highways should be directed to CalTrans. The phone number of their local district office is (559) 488-4020.

How can I determine if I am a resident of the county or the city? (Caller resides on Tyler between Fine and Winery.)

The block of Tyler between Fine and Winery has 11 parcels, 10 of which are in the County, and one which is in the City of Fresno. The parcel located at the northwest corner of Tyler and Fine is in the City of Fresno. If you live on any of the other parcels, then you are a resident of the County. For additional information regarding property lines and jurisdictions, please contact the Fresno County Assessor's office at 488-3534

Is there a non-profit organization that provides solar power alternatives to low income residents?

Yes. The organization is called Grid Alternatives. Their website address is www.gridalternatives.org or you can call (559) 261-4743.

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DEPARTMENT: PARKS AND RECREATION

What is the future plan for the Garden of the Sun? (CMO stated an agreement with Discovery Center will be in place within the next 30 to 45 days.)

The City is currently in negotiations with the Discovery Center to establish a partnership agreement, which will include management of the Garden of the Sun. Additional information is expected to be available soon.

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC UTILITIES

Is there a study being done on economic impact to City of Fresno and other major cities in Valley on shortage of water and impact to agribusiness?

An expansive study of this nature would generally not be conducted by the City of Fresno, since it involves many jurisdictions and interests outside of the City's scope of responsibility. Still, the City's Department of Public Utilities (including the Water Division) frequently provides information to outside organizations, on request, to assist with studies relating to water resource issues. The Department of Public Utilities does, however, manage the City of Fresno's water supply - including infrastructure and conservation activities - for the 500,000 people who call Fresno home. The department makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on matters affecting the use and cost of water to its customers.

Who is responsible for the ponding basin at Hamilton and Peach? City needs to follow up for resident with Fresno Irrigation District.

A review of a map of the region near Hamilton and Peach indicates that there are three basins. Two are operated by Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD). FMFCD Basin PP is located closest to Hamilton and Peach, but actually fronts Willow Avenue just south of Butler Avenue and a residential lot lies between this Basin and Hamilton Avenue. FMFCD Basin BE is located along Helm Avenue east of Willow Avenue and north of Church Avenue within a residential neighborhood. From the same map, there also appears to be a third basin, though significantly smaller than the FMFCD Basins. This piece of private property located at 5138 E. Dwight Way east of Peach and just north of the railroad tracks that appears to resemble a flood control basin, though it is not owned by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District. The City's Code Enforcement division will investigate to determine whether any violations currently exist

on the properties in the area. In addition, FMFCD can be reached directly at 456-3292 or via e-mail at info@fresnofloodcontrol.org

DEPARTMENT: PENSION SYSTEM

What's being done to address pension obligations in City?

The City of Fresno manages two pension funds: a Public Safety Fund and a General Employee Fund. Through prudent fiscal management, these funds have been among the best "funded" systems in the State for years. Even through the current recession, the systems remain well-funded. When the economy was doing well, the City's pension system was earning enough return on investment that the City was not required to make contributions from the City's general fund. However, employees continued to make their required contributions. Now that global markets have declined, the City's is required to once again make its contributions to the retirement funds.

The City's contribution amounts are appropriate for a system of our size. Still, as responsible stewards of the public's money and trust, the City is making every effort to identify best practices and explore any needed reforms to the systems. On March 3, 2010, the City Manager will convene a Pension Best Practices Analysis Task Force. Meetings of the Task Force will be open to the public. An expert firm, Bartel Associates, LLC, will guide the process. All reports and recommendations from the Task Force will be available to the public on the City's website.

DEPARTMENT: MAYOR/CITY MANAGER

Info on what residents can do to address fiscal irresponsibility in Sacramento – provide info on Save Our Local Services initiative

One way to address concerns about the impact of actions by Sacramento on local service is to visit www.SaveLocalServices.Com. The site includes important information about an initiative currently being qualified for placement on the November 2010 ballot. This measure would prohibit the state from taking or borrowing local taxpayer funds that are already dedicated to public safety, emergency response, transportation and other vital local government services.